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## THE WORK OF TRAINED ECONOMISTS IN THE INDUSTRIAL COMMISSION.

Whatever the excellencies or defects of the United States Industrial Commission reports, as compared with other publications of the government, they will have a peculiar interest for economic students throughout the country entirely apart from the subject-matter of the reports in themselves. For to a larger degree than in the work of any other branch of governmental service prior to this time, they represent the output of professional economists trained in our American universities. The overwhelming majority of experts and specialists in the employ of the Commission has had a distinctively collegiate preparation for work along lines of economic investigation.

In order to illustrate the degree of this preponderance, a few details may not be without interest. Professor Durand, the secretary of the Commission, has, in addition to his administrative work, prepared three separate special reports, upon Immigration Statistics, upon Mine Labor, and, in conjunction with Mr. C. E. Edgerton, upon Labor Disputes and Arbitration. The expert agents of the Commission upon Trusts, Immigration and Allied Problems, and Transportation, Messrs. Jenks, Commons, and Ripley, as well as Dr. E. R. Johnson, now a member of the Isthmian Canal Commission, are all college professors. Four reports—namely, upon Trust and Corporation Legislation, Industrial Combinations in Europe, the Effect of Combinations upon Prices, and Prices of Trust Securities—are the work of Professor Jenks. A special report upon The Economic Effect of Immigration, embracing an elaborate study of the “sweating system,” has been prepared by Professor Commons; and a report upon the Present Status of American Railroads and the Effects of Legislation has been prepared by Dr. Ripley. Besides the work of these regular employees of the Commission, who have at the same time contributed to its work in other ways, as in the examina-

tion of witnesses, etc., a number of other special reports have been prepared by economists temporarily associated in its work. Among these may be mentioned Professor Lindsay's report upon Railway Labor; Dr. McCrea's Taxation of Transportation Corporations; Professor Crowell's Distribution of Farm Products; and Professor B. H. Meyer's Railway Regulation under Domestic and Foreign Laws. The difficult work of digesting, indexing, and editing the enormous mass of testimony has been chiefly in charge of Drs. West and Whitten, Mr. Edgerton and Miss Laughlin, all under the direct inspiration of Professor Durand. Two women, both university graduates, trained in economics, Miss Laughlin and Dr. Claghorn, have prepared reports upon Domestic Service, the Foreign Immigrant in New York City, and the Agricultural Distribution of Immigrants, respectively. As compared with this expert work, the small proportion due to others than university-trained economists is significant. Mr. F. J. Stimson's two reports upon Labor Legislation, Domestic and Foreign, are the work of a lawyer of established reputation. The only other special reports are those of Messrs. Clapperton upon Taxation, Turner upon Chinese Immigration, Dodge upon Farm Labor, Christy upon Warehouse and Elevator Laws, Stewart and Olmsted on Convict Labor, and Miss Helen M. Marot upon the Clothing Trade in Philadelphia.

This experiment of almost exclusively employing university trained economists is in part due to the peculiarly temporary character of the work, which, being under the control of Congress, is not subject to civil service rules. The results should be of great interest to the colleges of the country as a whole. If the work of the Commission bear the stamp of genuine research, it cannot fail to stimulate the development of economics in our graduate schools. It may also, perhaps, if the character of the work prove commendable, pave the way to a modification of some of the civil service rules, which to-day render the temporary employment of experts in government bureaus a matter of difficulty.

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